

I Cor. 10:1-5; Baptised into the Red Sea I. The Recipients of Baptism II. The Mediator of the Covenant III. The Meaning of Baptism

Congregation of our Lord Jesus Christ, the crossing of the Red Sea is one of the most memorable moments found in the book of Exodus. We have all pictured this moment in our mind- with Moses standing on a cliff with the staff in his hands. The wind whips up, and the sea starts to be pushed back until it stands in a heap- like walls on either side as the Israelites pass through. But did you know that God was teaching us about baptism when the Red Sea was parted? Today with Anna's baptism we have the opportunity to remember the symbolism and meaning of baptism which is a truth already revealed in the OT. We consider this theme: Jesus Christ baptizes His people at the Red Sea as a call to faith.

I. The Recipients of Baptism

In our first point we consider who it is that received this sign of baptism. In our text from I Cor. 10 we ask- who passed through the water? In the first verse, we find that our fathers were all under the cloud and all passed through the sea. In referring to our fathers, Paul is pointing to the OT saints and specific the 12 tribes of Israel. The sons of Jacob- the OT covenant people of God. It is to the seed of Abraham that this sign is given. And then we find a specific focus on the entirety of this group. All there under the cloud and all passed through the sea- and all were baptised. So there is a distinct focus on the "all" aspect of this sacrament. Thus it is made clear, the sign is designed for all those who are called and gathered by God- those are His people. This would include male and female. Young and old- anyone who shared this identity and all who were called by the name of God. So the question before us this morning is this- who is baptism for? Who should receive the sign of covenant? The answer is- all those who are joined to God and called by His name. This is why we include the children of believers in the sacrament of baptism. This is why little Anna is here today! As LD 27 puts it- the infant children of believers are included in God's covenant and people. They no less than adults are promised the deliverance from sin by Jesus blood and the Holy Spirit. That is why we talk about household baptism or

covenant baptism. Just as the parents would have carried their little ones through the Red Sea, so believing parents continue to carry their little ones to the baptismal font today. Since their identity as a child of God who is holy and set apart for God is clear, so too should receive the sign that is for the entire congregation of God.

II. The Mediator of the Covenant

But who lead these people into the water? Who was the shepherd that guided them both into and out of the water? The answer is clear- Moses was the mediator who led them. Moses as a prophet was the one through whom God spoke. It was by Moses' word that the plagues had been justly inflicted on the Egyptians. It was by Moses' prayer the people were spared. Moses was the mouthpiece of God- used by God to secure manna and water from the rock. So v. 2 says that they were baptized into Moses. Now being baptized into Moses is a way of identifying the people and their union with the God appointed leader. Baptism is a way of uniting and identifying the people with their leader. Moses was a leader like no other. It was by his hand that the Law had been delivered. It was His hands that God used to part the raging sea. It was his hands that were raised in blessing the people. It was by His hand that spiritual food and drink were secured. Even though it was in sinful anger- it was his staff that struck the rock and caused water to flow out. Oh- and by the way- that rock was Christ. Here Paul seamlessly transitions from Moses to Jesus Christ as the Mediator of the New Covenant. If Moses was seen as the mediator of the Old Covenant- as Moses led through the sea and cut the covenant with Israel at Sinai; then Jesus is the mediator of the New. But Moses would remain a picture- a shadow- a type of the coming Christ. Where Moses could only receive the Law- Jesus is the Word of God. Jesus is the heavenly manna and the heavenly drink- even the rock from whose side healing water would flow. Jesus not only provides the food for our souls- He is the food for our souls! We eat and drink of Him for the forgiveness of sins and unto eternal life. As Rom. 6:3 puts it, those who are baptized into Christ were baptized into His death. It is interesting to note that not only did Moses lead the Israelites into the water- he himself was baptized

with them. Moses shares in their baptism as he represents those who follow. In a similar way, it was necessary for Jesus to be baptized on behalf of his people. As He instructed John in Matthew 3, it was necessary for Jesus to be baptized in order to fulfill all righteousness. We are promised by Moses himself that God would raise up another prophet after him. As Dt. 18 says- the LORD will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you. It is to him you shall listen.

III. The Meaning of Baptism

Now that we have considered the mediator, what remains the meaning of this Red Sea baptism. Now the name of the sea- being Red- is likely derived from the word for reed or bullrush. It describes a cattail like plant that grows on the bank of the sea. One that could be found along the Nile River as well. The sea is not red in color but rather lined by reeds. And as a sign, this particular baptism in the Red Sea is both a good news and a bad news sermon. The sign is both a promise and a warning. What makes the difference is this- which mediator are you following? If Pharaoh was your leader- then the Red Sea would be your doom! If Moses was your leader, then the Red Sea was your salvation! So the Red Sea is both a picture of life and death. Death for the Egyptians who entered the water and never came out. The Red Sea was really the death of a nation- the Egyptian army was wiped out in a single day. The same Pharaoh who had once tried to drown the Israelite boys in the water was himself swept away in the flood of the Red Sea. And for the Israelites, their old life was being put to death as well. Their identity as slaves was being washed away- just as their sins would need to be washed away as well. So there is death- burial that takes place at the Sea. But also life- birth and resurrection are present. A new nation is born at the Red Sea. The people coming out of the water was like a child immersing from the womb. Being baptized into Moses meant that they were going from the land of bondage and death to the land of promise, blessing and rest! Now this whole Ex. 15 narrative is given as an example. As v. 6 puts it- these things took place an example to us. So what happened to the Egyptians and the Israelites is meant to teach us New Covenant Christians something? But what are we supposed to learn? Well, it is interesting that the

focus in our passage is once again on the warning aspect. Be careful- consider your ways as you think about the Red Sea and your own baptism. Do not assume that you are in the right place today. As v. 5 clearly warns- even the Israelites who cross the Red Sea got it wrong. Those who were baptized into Moses ended up missing out on the promised land. They all died in the wilderness. So did Moses as well! So, what happened? Well, those who received the sign of baptism did not embrace the true mediator with a heart of faith. They were idolatrous as our chapter will continue to explain in v. 8. So the baptism at the Red Sea under the leadership of Moses is set before us principally as warning! Do not eat the spiritual food and drink while forsaking the rock- who is Christ! Do not be washed in the water as the Israelites were without being united to Christ by faith and being washed in His blood! Do not content yourself with the sign while forsaking the meaning behind the sign! To say this another way- everyone who is baptized must embrace Jesus with a heart of faith! Those baptized externally must be washed internally! For without faith in Jesus Christ, the water of baptism does you no good! Just as those who were baptized in the Red Sea did not really benefit from the sign, so also today anyone who is baptized but then refuses to embrace Jesus the mediator misses out on the benefit! Receiving the sign is no substitute for faith and repentance! So the application sounds like this- do not be like the Israelites who were baptized into Moses- who received the sign- but missed out on the promised land because of their rebellion and idolatry. Only those who embrace Jesus Christ with a heart of faith are pleasing to God. You must be united to the mediator Jesus lest you be swept away in the flood! And for those who are united to the Rock Christ- baptism points to your new and eternal life in the promised land!

As we close, baptism is a wonderful picture of the power of Christ's blood. As LD 27 puts it, only Jesus' blood and the Holy Spirit cleanse us from our sins. As the water was parted by the Divine wind, so the Spirit of God and the blood of the Jesus must be present and working for us to be clean. Jesus Christ baptizes His people at the Red Sea as a call to faith. Let us learn from the Israelites of old. Believe in Jesus and be washed in His blood- and you will have everlasting life!